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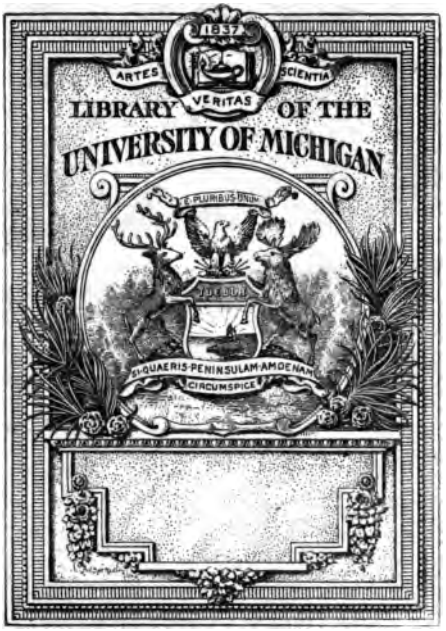
THE NAME OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

JOHN LOUIS HANEY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THE NAME OF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

A STUDY IN ORTHOGRAPHY

BY

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TO

MY FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE

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PREFACE

It is useless to dismiss the orthography of Shakespeare's name as a trivial matter. We may spell Lyly, Wycliffe and a half-score of other names as we please, but there will be no peace in literary realms so long as a single critic or scholar of repute persists in employing any variation in the name of our greatest poet. The general reader, unaware of the fact that Shakspeare and Shakespear still have their champions, may imagine that the controversy has narrowed down to a determination of the relative merits of Shakespeare and Shakspere. All four of these forms are still used, though the first two are obsolescent and there will be few to mourn their departure.

At this day it would be folly to consider the form Shakspere as a dangerous rival of the more popular Shakespeare. With all respect for the few scholars who still advocate its use as the poet's spelling of his own name, we can only repeat, probably for the one hundredth time, that there are more trustworthy guides at hand than the five

wretched scrawls which a reluctant world is constrained to accept as the autographs of its greatest poet. The champions of Shakespeare have repeatedly cited the precedents for that form; they have dwelt on the fact that none previous to 1780 and few since then have cast their decision for Shakspere; they have emphasized the futility of seeking to change the authoritative spelling upon the meager evidence of five signatures which the Shakspereites themselves admit they cannot read. Madden and Knight based their contention for Shakspere mainly upon the Florio Montaigne autograph, which is now generally rejected as spurious; Dr. Furnivall feels certain of the spelling of only one of the five genuine signatures; yet scholars who usually submit matters in dispute to the closest scrutiny and severest tests accept the shorter spelling. It is significant that most of the men whose opinions are quoted in the following pages do not consider uniformity in spelling the poet's name as important.

This study, therefore, should not be regarded as a controversial document on the relative merits of the various spellings. The sentiment of the learned world is so overwhelmingly in favor of the accepted form that we may fairly consider the ques-

tion settled as far as the existing evidence admits of any satisfactory conclusion. The following pages seek simply to present in convenient form the principal facts that have been elicited concerning the origin and etymology of the name and the vicissitudes of its orthography at various periods of its history.

None will deny that it is far more important to study and to seek to appreciate the greatness of Shakespeare's literary utterance than to wrangle (though good-naturedly) over the e's and a's in his name. At the same time, it is widely held that the present lack of uniformity in that matter is discreditable to the English world of letters, and that any sincere effort to correct this condition cannot be wholly in vain.

I wish to acknowledge my obligations to the scholars and librarians who have replied to my request for information concerning their preferences in the orthography of the name. As their replies are incorporated in the text I trust it will not be necessary to enumerate their names here. The best Shakespeare-men, like Dr. Furness, Mr. Sidney Lee and Dr. W. J. Rolfe, were already on record in print and are cited at the proper places in the study. The present generation of Shakspere-

ites, with the notable exception of Dr. Furnivall, have been more reticent thus far in print, but have stood faithfully by their colors in their personal communications to me. I am also deeply indebted to Dr. Lane Cooper of Cornell University and to Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach for their kindness in reading the proof-sheets and suggesting noteworthy changes.

J. L. H.

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL,
Philadelphia.

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I. *The Name Shakespeare*

When Mr. Sidney Lee published his *Life of William Shakespeare* in 1898 he cited[1] as the first recorded holder of the surname a John Shakespeare who in 1279 was living at "Freyndon." In his recent revised edition (1905) Mr. Lee mentioned a William Shakespeare or "Sakspere" who was convicted of robbery and hanged in 1248. The latter, by the lucky accident of his name and by virtue of his crime, thus immortalized himself and takes precedence over the now supplanted John of a generation later. As a matter of fact, John is not even second. Mr. Lionel Cresswell[2] has called attention to a Simon Sakesper in Wantham in 1250, and Mrs. C. C. Stopes[3] found a Simon Shakespeye in 1260, a Geoffrey Shakespeare in 1268, and a Simon Sakesper in 1278. She mentioned sundry other Shakesperes and Shakespeares (as yet, no Shaksperes) during the fourteenth century. The first Warwickshire holder of the name

[1] Lee, *Life of William Shakespeare,* (1898) p. 1; revised ed., (1905) p. 1.

[2] *Notes and Queries,* (Ninth Series) II, p. 167.

[3] Stopes, *Shakespeare's Family,* (1901) pp. 4, 5.

was a Thomas Shakespere who in 1359 was a fugitive felon, apparently no more given to virtue than the original William.

During the fifteenth century the family flourished widely. The name occurs frequently in the Register of the Guild of St. Anne at Knowle. Between 1457–1486 it is found eight times on the Register, thrice as Shakespere, once each as Schakespeire, Chacsper, Shakespeyre, Schakspere and Shakspere. Other variations found elsewhere during that century are Shakespeyr, Shakesper and Schakesper.

In the sixteenth century we find more frequent record of the Warwickshire family from which the poet probably sprang. The prevailing forms of the name are Shakespeare and Shakespere, with an occasional Shakspere. The only variations of interest previous to 1560 are Shakespeer, Shakyspere and Schakespeir. These differences in the names of various members of the family are not greater than the variations found in the spelling of an individual name. The poet's father figured frequently in the Stratford registers and in many spellings, among others Shakyspere, Shakspeyre, Shaksper, Shaxpeare, Shaxspere, Shakesper, Shaxbere and Shackespeere.[1] It would be useless to multiply ex-

[1] Stopes, pp. (52–58).

amples of Elizabethan carelessness in the orthography of proper names.

At first sight few things seem more obvious than the origin of the name Shakespeare which was borne by our great dramatist and by no one of any importance either before or since; yet scholars have given much thought to the subject in their vain attempts to avoid the obvious. There are many problems connected with Shakespeare that have given rise to some sort of controversy and among these the etymology of the name is not the least. Joseph Hunter, in his *Prolusions Genealogical on the Family of Shakespeare*[1] (1844), summarized the results of the earlier attempts to arrive at the origin of the name and quoted the well-known passage from Camden's *Remains* (1605): "Some are named for what they commonly carried,—as Palmer, that is, Pilgrime, for that they carried palme when they returned from Hierusalem; Longsword, Broad-speare, Fortescu, that is, Strongshield, and in some respect, Break-speare, Shakespeare, Shot-bolt, Wagstaffe." Hunter found it difficult to see how "the circumstance that he *shook a spear* can have given a name to any person."

[1] Reprinted (1845) in his *New Illustrations of the Life, Studies, and Writings of Shakespeare*, I (1–122).

Zachary Bogan[1] sought to account for it as an equivalent for soldier, because "the custom first, πάλλειν, to vibrate the spear before they used it, was so constantly kept, that ἐγχέσπαλος,[2] a *shake-speare*, came at length to be an ordinary word, both in Homer and other poets, to signify a soldier."

In 1865 Professor C. F. Koch explained[3] that the elements in the name are *shake* and *spere*. The former is the Anglo-Saxon *scacan* or *sceacan*, which developed regularly to *shake*. The latter was Anglo-Saxon *spere* which became *spear*. Had the name occurred in Anglo-Saxon it would have been Scac-spere or Sceac-spere. Koch concluded that the correct Middle English form would have been Shakspere, the transition form Shakspeare, which should now be Shakspear. It is evident that Koch reached this conclusion upon the assumption that the first syllable remained short.

George Russell French in his *Shakspeareana Genealogica* (1868) considered[4] the question of the surname more fully. He summarized the

[1] *Archæologiæ Atticæ*, by Francis Rous, with additions by Zachary Bogan, (1658) p. 324.

[2] Cf. the Latin *Hasta Vibrans* and the Italian *Crollalanza*.

[3] *Jahrbuch für roman. und eng. Sprache und Litteratur*, VI (322–326).

[4] French, pp. (347–350).

notices of early Shakespeares and extended Hunter's list to fifty-six actual variations in the spelling of the name. Among the rarer forms in his list are Schakespeire, Sakespere, Shakysper, Shakesspere, Shaxkespere, Shackspare and Shaxpeer.

In 1872 Mr. Alexander J. Ellis wrote a most useful letter to the *Athenæum*[1] on the pronunciation of Shakespeare's name. He said that in his *Early English Pronunciation* he had uniformly spelled the poet's name Shakspere, because so far as he could read the acknowledged signatures, this was what the letters meant. He showed that the pronunciation by the poet's contemporaries might be represented as *Shahkspair,* but as we do not attempt to reproduce Elizabethan pronunciation in reading the plays we need hardly imitate it in pronouncing the name. We are right in calling the poet *Shaikspeer,* but *Shackspeer* was as impossible in the poet's day as in our own, though it might have been *Shahkspair* with a short Italian *a.*[2] As for the various endings -spere, -speere,

[1] *Athenæum,* 1872, II, p. 207.

[2] Dr. Furnivall, under date of January 26, 1906, wrote me as follows: "I feel that the main reason why folk prefer the weak form Shakespeare to the strong form Shakspere is the general ignorance of the pronunciation of *a* in his time, and the belief that he and his contemporaries pronounced it long and soft, like we do

-speare, -speer and -spear, they might all have represented the same sound in the sixteenth century.[1]

Dr. C. M. Ingleby in 1877 discussed the meaning of the surname[2] and gathered a few of the more curious and far-fetched etymologies that had been suggested. Thus, Dr. R. S. Charnock, disapproving of the "spear-shaking" theory, attempted by a liberal interpretation of philological law to trace the name to Sigisbert ("renowned for victory"). Having triumphantly accomplished the transition through the forms Sigsbert, Sigsber, Siksper, Shiksper, Shaksper and Shakspere, he admitted that he had not found the form Sigisbert, but there was a Sigibert, a Sigismerus and a Sigis-

'make,' instead of sharp, like we do 'ah, father, Shah.' If people realized that S.'s name was pronounced 'Shahkspare' they'd more readily give up their modern 'Shakespeer.'"

[1] The *Century Dictionary,* which prefers the spelling Shakspere, indicates the pronunciation as Shāk'spēr, originally Shak'spēr. Now the latter corresponds phonetically to Shackspeer, which, according to Ellis, was impossible. It is not easy to determine how the spelling which the *Century* advocates could have resulted in the modern pronunciation which the *Century* accepts. (See Nares' *Glossary,* p. 784.) Moreover, among its variant spellings, the *Century Dictionary* includes Shaxper, of which no living person would be guilty, and omits Shakspeare, which had for a time a most respectable following. See p. 42. The *Standard Dictionary* places Shakspeare second among its variants.

[2] Ingleby, *The Man and The Book,* pp. (12–21).

mund.[1] A Robert Ferguson further enlightened[2] the world by suggesting the actual Old German name Sigispero, from which he assumed a form Sigisper and said, rather naively: "now though the change from Sigisper into Shakspere would scarcely be justified on etymological principles, it might be accounted for by the continual inclination to twist names into something like a meaning." Dr. Charnock scorned this point of view.[3] Shortly after this, another correspondent, who took good care to conceal his identity under the initials R. T. A., suggested[4] that the name "no doubt originated in the Norman or French edition of the double beloved-disciple name (Jacques-pierre, James-peter, Iakespear) of which it is composed, the initial J being pronounced *sh,* as in many other instances." Still unconvinced, Dr. Charnock ventured another guess[5] that the name would corrupt from Shachsburh (otherwise Isaacsbury) whence a possible Semitic origin for the poet. Dr. Charles Mackay, [6] inspired by the extensive Celtic nomenclature of

[1] *Notes and Queries,* (Second Series) IX, p. 459 (1860).
[2] *Ibid.,* X, p. 15 (1860).
[3] *Ibid.,* X (122–123).
[4] *Ibid.,* XI, p. 86 (1861).
[5] *Ibid.,* (Fifth Series) II, p. 405 (1874).
[6] *Athenæum,* 1875, II, p. 437.

Warwickshire, refused to credit a Saxon origin for the name of Shakespeare. He traced it to the Celtic Schacspeir meaning "dry shanks" (cf. Sheepshank and Cruikshank). An undoubted humorist, signing himself Jabez, would have none of these derivations. He clung to the hope[1] that the bard's family came from Italy, and that the name was but a corruption of that of the Florentine historian, Lapus Biragus. As Lapus is Florentine for Jacob, we would thus have Jacobsbirage, whence through Schacobspire we arrive without much violence at Shakspere. Yet some people complain that etymology is dull and uninteresting!

While we cannot take any of these ingenious flights very seriously, we must assume a different attitude toward the correspondence between Dr. Henry Bradley and Professor A. L. Mayhew in *The Academy* during 1887. In his first letter[2] Dr. Bradley expressed dissatisfaction with the idea that the name originally meant "spear-shaker." It was more probably "an etymologising distortion of something more in accordance with the analogies of English family nomenclature." He suggested its derivation from the Anglo-Saxon

[1] *Notes and Queries,* (Fifth Series) V, p. 352 (1876).
[2] *The Academy,* XXXI, pp. 94, 168, 183, 203, and 222.

name Seaxberht, and that the well-known form Shaxberd instead of being a blunder was a colloquial survival of the original name. To this Professor Mayhew humourously replied that he could not take Mr. Bradley seriously in this suggestion, but assuming that he is serious, Mayhew cited numerous analogies to the spear-shaking, such as Wagspere, Breakspear,[1] etc. He showed that by "popular etymology" Seaxberht would have become not Shakspere but Saxbert. In his second letter Dr. Bradley confessed that he was in earnest. He questioned the validity of Mayhew's parallels and declared his belief that "popular etymology" is "capable of effecting any phonetic change, however abnormal, short of the absolute destruction of all resemblance to the original form." Professor Mayhew then noted that whereas Shakespeare as a name is not known before the fifteenth[2] century, Seaxberht is a pre-Conquest form, and requested Dr. Bradley to explain the "chasm of centuries" between them. The discussion ended with Dr. Bradley's third letter, in which he still adhered to his theory.

[1] Mr. N. J. Hone, in *Notes and Queries,* (Tenth Series) V (89–90) has recently (1906) cited an instance where the poet's grandfather is mentioned as Richard Shakkespere, and where, in one entry, the name Shakstaff is substituted.

[2] We have seen that it is found in the thirteenth century.

Recently Professor John W. Hales interpreted[1] the name as an epithet for one who threatened attack but who did not fulfill his threat—a sort of drawcansir, whose hand was always on his weapon, but was chary of using it.[2] He fully illustrated and fortified his position by quotations from the classics and from contemporary Elizabethan works. There undoubtedly was, as he said, "a generation ago a great disposition to mistrust the obvious in etymology." With due respect to the vagaries of popular etymology, there is, however, no valid reason at this time for dissenting from Professor Hales' conclusion that the name was simply a compound of *shake* and *spear,* whether first applied jocularly or not. This "common-sense" conclusion received the approval of the Rev. W. W. Skeat as early as 1874, when he deprecated[3] some of the absurd guesses then being made. Mr. Sidney Lee[4] dismisses the matter briefly with the observation that "the surname had originally a martial

[1] *Athenæum,* 1903, II (230–232).

[2] Charles W. Bardsley, in *Notes and Queries,* (Fifth Series) II, p. 2, and in his *Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames,* regarded the name as originally the nickname of some officer of the law, and thinks that it was derisive, just as Wag-feather, Wag-tail, Shake-lance and Shake-shaft.

[3] *Notes and Queries,* (Fifth Series) II, p. 444.

[4] Lee, *Life of Shakespeare* (1905), p. 1.

significance, implying capacity in the wielding of the spear."[1]

[1] It may not be amiss to add that the Rev. Henry Barber, in his *British Family Names* (2nd ed., 1903) seeks to connect Shakespeare with the Norman-French Saquespée, which occurs in the surname Sakespee as early as 1195.

II. *The Stratford Registers*

The registers of such a town as Stratford-on-Avon during the days of Elizabeth and James I are necessarily of scant authority in determining the correct orthography of the poet's name. Their characteristic variations are sufficient to neutralize the value of their evidence, save as to the fact that at Stratford the first syllable of the name was probably pronounced short.

In the baptismal record[1] of the eight children of John Shakespeare—Jone, Margareta, Gulielmus, Gilbertus, Jone, Anna, Richard and Edmund—the name is spelled Shakspere, except in the case of Richard, who is entered as the "sonne to Mr. John Shakspeer." The poet's own children, Susanna (1583) and the twins Hamnet and Judith (1584) are also baptized under the name Shakspere. The record of the burial of Hamnet (August 11, 1596) again uses Shakspere, but at the death of Shakespeare's father in 1601 the spelling becomes Shakspear.[2]

[1] These entries are printed in Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, II (51–52); also in D. H. Lambert's *Shakespeare Documents*, pp. 1, 3, 5, 14, etc.

[2] Thus Lambert; Halliwell-Phillipps reads it Shakspeare.

The burial of the poet's youngest brother is recorded on the registers of St. Saviour's, Southwark, in 1607 as "Edmund Shakespeare, a player." Thus, when we turn to London, we at once find the long form. Returning to Stratford, we find John Hall in 1607 marrying Susanna Shaxpere; in 1608 Shakespeare's mother was buried as "Mayry Shaxpere, wydowe"; in 1612 occurred the burial of Gilbertus Shakspeare and in 1613 that of Richard Shakspeare.

On February 10, 1616, Thomas Queeny married Judith Shakspere, and a few months later comes the most interesting of the burial records:

1616, Aprill 25. Will. Shakspeare, gent.[1]

The same spelling is used in recording the burial of the poet's widow in 1623.

While in this mortuary strain, it is well to mention that the inscription cut upon Shakespeare's monument in Trinity Church, Stratford spells the name Shakspeare.[2] On the widow's epitaph it becomes Shakespeare—the only time that the generally accepted spelling is found in these records at

[1] Thus Lambert; Halliwell-Phillipps reads Shakspere.

[2] Incorrectly given as Shakespeare by Lambert, and by Sidney Lee in the early editions of his *Life of Shakespeare;* corrected in the fifth edition (1905). Halliwell-Phillipps gives fac-similes of both inscriptions. See *Outlines,* I, pp. 284, 288.

Stratford, though it is noteworthy that the short form Shakspere, which is so frequently upheld as the "Stratford spelling" occurs but once in these records after 1600.

III. *Contemporary Documents*

It is fair to assume that a legal document in most parts of the civilized world to-day would be a reasonably safe guide in determining the orthography of a proper name, yet this was far from true in Elizabethan days. Not only was the spelling unsettled to the degree of utter indifference, but the scribes who drew up the documents did not hesitate to introduce two or three variants of a name into a single document. Irregularities that would now lead to grave complications were then tolerated and widely practiced.

In the following summary of the spelling of the poet's name in the more important documents associated with him, the orthography given by Lambert and by Halliwell-Phillipps has been regarded as correct, with due respect for other writers who have reprinted the records in question. One or two documents concerning John Shakespeare will afford a proper starting-point.

In the fine[1] levied on John Shakespeare in 1575 on the purchase of the two houses in Henley Street

[1] Lambert, *Shakespeare Documents*, no. 8.

the name is spelled Shakespere; the same is true of the fine[1] levied in 1579 when Shakespeare's parents mortgaged the estate at Aston Cantlowe. On the Episcopal Register of Worcester is the perplexing record[2] of the dispensation of November 27, 1582, permitting a marriage between "Wm. Shaxpere et Annā Whateley de Temple Grafton." Mr. Sidney Lee is of the opinion that this license does not refer to the poet and Anne Hathaway. Many modern authorities accept it, offering various explanations; at any rate, the spelling of the names is not much worse than that of the marriage-bond of the following day on the same register, wherein the parties are Willm̃ Shagspere and Anne Hathwey of Stratford.

The bill of complaint[3] brought by the poet's father against John Lambert in 1589 respecting the estate at Wilmecote has the typical irregularities of an Elizabethan document. There the names of John and William Shackespere occur thus some sixteen times, but also twice as Shackspere and once as Shackspeare. Thus far Stratford and environs. The first London record is in the manuscript ac-

[1] Lambert, no. 9.
[2] *Ibid.*, no. 11.
[3] *Ibid.*, no. 15; also Halliwell-Phillipps, II (11–13).

counts[1] of the Treasurer of the Chamber—a memorandum of payment to "Willm Kempe, Willm Shakespeare & Richarde Burbage" on March 15, 1595, for two comedies performed before the Queen. It is noteworthy that the spelling now generally preferred is found in this early document, in which the poet's name is linked with those of the foremost actors of his time.

In the Grant of Arms[2] of 1596 to John Shakespeare the name appears as Shakespere at the head of the document, but in the body it is Shakespeare several times. The same spelling is observed uniformly in the fine[3] levied on the poet at Easter, 1597, on the purchase of New Place. The spellings Shakspeere (four times) and Shakespere (twice) are found in the papers[4] concerning the estate at Wilmecote. In the crude letter[5] of the illiterate Abraham Sturley to his brother-in-law Richard Quiney (January 24, 1598) their "countriman" is referred to as "Mr. Shaksper," but in the more notable epistle written by Quiney to the poet on October 25th of that year, the address is

[1] Lambert, no. 25.
[2] *Ibid.*, no. 30.
[3] *Ibid.*, no. 32.
[4] *Ibid.*, no. 35; also Halliwell-Phillipps, II (14–17).
[5] Lambert, no. 39.

spelled Shackespere. The same unusual spelling occurs in the Stratford records in a Return[1] of the Quantities of Corn and Malt held by the inhabitants of the ward in which New Place is situated (February 4, 1599).

The form Shakespere occurs throughout the confirmation[2] of the Grant of Arms to John Shakespeare in 1599 and in the deed[3] of conveyance of over one hundred acres of land to the poet in 1602 by William and John Combe. In the same year the frank pledge[4] by which Walter Getley surrendered to Shakespeare the premises in Chapel Lane, Stratford, reads both Shackespere and Shakespere.

In the Royal Warrant[5] issued for a Patent authorizing the theatrical company of which Shakespeare was a member and in the Patent itself (May 17–19, 1603) the name of the poet is spelled Shakespeare. The great regularity with which this form prevails in most documents relating to his activity as playwright and actor casts additional suspicion on the authenticity of the accounts of the

[1] Lambert, no. 53.
[2] *Ibid.*, no. 55.
[3] *Ibid.*, no. 79; also Halliwell-Phillipps, II (17–19).
[4] Lambert, no. 81.
[5] *Ibid.*, no. 87.

Revels at Court[1] wherein the name occurs repeatedly as Shaxberd. When in 1605 the poet acquired the lease[2] of a moiety of the tithes of Stratford and the vicinity his name appeared eighteen times as Shakespear and twice as Shakespeare. In a similarly careless document[3] concerning the Stratford tithes the name occurs once as Shakespere, once as Shakspeare and thrice as Shakespeare. The form Shakespere is found six times in the foot[4] of a fine levied in 1610 on the purchase of an estate from the Combes.

A recently discovered reference to Shakespeare (announced by Mr. Sidney Lee through *The London Times*) shows from the account of the household expenses of the sixth Earl of Rutland the payment on March 31, 1613, of forty-four shillings to "Mr Shakespeare" and a like sum to Richard Burbage for providing his Lordship with an impreso. In another recent discovery—the bill of complaint of April 15, 1615—the poet's name is spelled Shakespere, but in the answer to the bill (May 5, 1615) it is Shakespeare.[5]

[1] Lambert, no. 96 and 96a.

[2] *Ibid.*, no. 99; also Halliwell-Phillipps, II (19–25).

[3] Lambert, no. 125.

[4] *Ibid.*, no. 127.

[5] Printed by Professor C. W. Wallace in the London *Standard* on October 18th, 1905, more correctly in *Englische Studien*, XXXVI (56–63).

In this connection the most interesting of all extant documents are unquestionably the three that contain the authentic signatures of the poet. These are (1) the deed of bargain and sale of a house in Blackfriars, executed on March 10, 1613; (2) the mortgage-deed for the same property, dated on the following day; and (3) the will, dated March 25, 1616, drawn up on three sheets with the poet's autograph at the foot of each. In the body of the Blackfriars deed, as abridged by Lambert,[1] the name is spelled Shakespeare once and Shakspeare four times, though Halliwell-Phillipps' text[2] of the indenture enrolled in the Court of Chancery has Shakespeare throughout. The signature is usually conceded to be Shakspere. The mortgage-deed has the spelling Shakespeare uniformly; its signature, however, though more uncertain than the other, is probably Shakspere as before.

The will has Shackspeare in the body of the document,[3] but the three signatures have been variously interpreted. They are all accessible in fac-simile in Mr. Lee's *Life of Shakespeare* and have been

[1] Lambert, no. 136.
[2] Halliwell-Phillipps, II (31–34).
[3] Lambert, no. 145.

fully discussed in the revised (1905) edition of that book.[1] The first signature of the will is now so badly damaged that Mr. Lee's fac-simile is all but useless; a more satisfactory engraving made from the tracing by Steevens in 1776 is to be found in various works. Most authorities have read it as Shakspere. The second autograph, more straggling than the first, has been deciphered as Shakspere, Shakspeare, Shakspeere and even Shackspeare. The third Mr. Lee regards as undoubtedly Shakspeare—a conclusion reached by Steevens and Malone in 1776, though Malone afterwards believed that the third was Shakspere like the rest (as he read them) and that the supposed *a* in the second syllable resulted from a tremor of the poet's hand. Sir F. Madden in 1838 believed that all the signatures were Shakspere.

Since that time the most interesting discussion of the subject was the paper by Dr. F. J. Furnivall.[2] in 1895. His conclusions were that the Blackfriars deed was signed Shakspere; but the mortgage signature was Shakspear, "if the contraction mark over the *e* is meant for *a*, as it probably

[1] Lee, (revised ed.) pp. 276, 278, 282.

[2] Furnivall, *On Shakspere's Signatures,* in *Journal of the Society of Archivists and Autograph Collectors.* No. 1. June, 1895.

is." As for the will-signatures, the first is either Shockspere or Shakspere; the second seems to be Shakspeere, though the second *e* may be meant for an *a*; the third is either Shakspeare or Shakespeare. Dr. Furnivall suggested that Shakespeare was probably sick when he signed the will—a view in which most admirers of the poet will be glad to concur. He goes on: "All manuscript or first-hand men, then, who judge by the poet's signatures, are bound by four instances to one to write the first syllable of our great dramatist's name as 'Shak,' not 'Shake,' while as to the second syllable, they are equally bound by a majority of three to two to spell it 'spere,' and not 'spear' or 'speare.' But there are not many manuscript men in the world; most folk are printed-book or second-hand men, and they say they don't care a straw for our wretched manuscripts. They swear by type; and if the poet's name is in print, then, like the ballad, it and its spelling 'must be true.' Shakspere's printers, not he himself, are the deciders of how his name should be spelt. This granted, the conclusion is certain. The printed spellings of Shakspere's name in his Poems, his Quartos, his contemporaries' writings, as well as his soon-successors, are almost always Shakespeare. The reason, of

course, is not far to seek. The Elizabethan time was full of conceits and canting terms; and to all users of them, the splitting of Shakspere's name into the verb 'shake'—shown by the fluttering bird in his coat-of-arms—and 'spear' was a matter of course. . . . For myself, I am a manuscript man, and I take the majority of Shakspere's own signatures to be worth more than a whole ocean of printers' spellings of his name. Further, I like to get him as free as possible from the London conceits of his day. I don't want their impertinences in his name, though I have to put up with them in his plays, and so I stick to Shakspere, and leave Shake-speare to the second-handers—charming fellows, some of them, but too fond of type."

Unfortunately for Dr. Furnivall's theory, the "second-handers" cannot help noting that by considering the syllables separately he has made an ingenious "four to one" and "three to two" plea for Shakspere, though he himself admitted that only one of the signatures is beyond a doubt Shakspere. If he, most ardent of champions, finds a possible Shakspear, Shockspere, Shakspeere and Shakespeare respectively in the other four signatures, the unbelieving "second-handers" must needs remain skeptical.

IV. *The Registers of the Stationers' Company*

We should hardly look in the records of the Stationers' Company for any authoritative evidence upon the spelling of an author's name. Even a cursory examination of Mr. Arber's monumental transcripts of the registers reveals the fact that the orthography of proper names is notoriously careless. Moreover, in the case of Shakespeare the name itself occurs but rarely, and when it is found, the expected variations minimize the usefulness of such evidence in the present discussion. These evidences may be gleaned from Mr. Arber's edition direct, but have been conveniently brought together elsewhere.[1]

The earliest Shakespearean entries are uniformly anonymous, so far as authorship is concerned. These include *Venus and Adonis* (1593), *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *Lucrece* (1594), the assignments of *Venus and Adonis* (1594–1596), *Richard*

[1] See the preliminary pages of Dr. Furnivall's *Some 300 Fresh Allusions to Shakspere from 1594 to 1694 A. D.*, published by the New Shakspere Society (1886), pp. (xxvii–xxxvi); also Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines*, I (331–333); and Lambert, *passim*.

II (1597), *Richard III* (1597), *Henry IV* (1598), *The Merchant of Venice* (1598), the "staying" of *As You Like It, Henry V,* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (1600), and *Henry V* (1600). The first entry in which Shakespeare's name occurs is that of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Henry IV, Part 2* on August 23, 1600, which were "wrytten by master Shakespere."[1] Then follow some eight anonymous entries between 1600–1607, until on November 26, 1607, there is entered "Master William Shakespeare[2] his historye of Kinge Lear." On May 2, 1608, the spurious *Yorkshire Tragedy* is entered as the work of Wylliam Shakespere, and on May 20, 1609, there is recorded a "booke called Shakespeares Sonnettes."

The remaining entries are anonymous until we reach the First Folio, which Blount and Jaggard entered as "master William Shakspeer's Comedyes, Histories, and Tragedyes" on November 8, 1623. Later entries are of less interest. In various assignments of plays previous to 1640 we find the forms Shackspere, Shackspheere, Shakspeare and Shakespeare.

[1] Both Collier and Dyce have Shakespeare.

[2] Dr. Furnivall reads Shakspeare.

A summary of the doubtful testimony culled from these otherwise extremely useful registers shows that the name of Shakespeare occurs twelve times, spelled in five different ways: the commonest form is Shakespeare, which is found five times, but Shakspere does not occur in a single instance.

V. *The Title-pages of the Quartos*

Under ordinary conditions we should expect to find an author's name correctly spelled on the title-pages of his works. No matter how illegible a scrawl a man will acknowledge as his autograph, we may take it for granted that when the name stands in type and the work passes under the author's supervision, it will be spelled in accordance with his wishes. Here, however, as in the case of the documents the evidence is virtually nullified by the fact that the quartos of Shakespeare's plays were probably all piratical ventures undertaken without the dramatist's sanction. None the less there is one bit of evidence that has always been deemed trustworthy by the majority of Shakespearean scholars. Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594), the first-fruits of his poetic muse, were issued with all the earmarks of authority. In neither case does the name of the poet appear on the title-page, but each is dedicated to the Earl of Southampton in a prefatory letter signed William Shakespeare. The letters are not private epistles that might have fallen into the

hands of a piratically-inclined printer; they are both written for publication. To question the authority of these issues would be absurd; and most men will admit that a young author would in all probability be more careful of the orthography of his name in the first heir of his invention than in a series of atrocious signatures which (presuming health and strength) he was willing to write so wretchedly that none has ever been able to read them satisfactorily. Under the existing conditions, this fact alone should have been sufficient to establish the accepted spelling for all time; endorsed as it is by every sort of documentary and printed evidence, it is difficult to see what excuse the variant forms from Shakspere down have for their existence.

Mr. D. H. Lambert in his *Shakespeare Documents* (1904) prints all the important titles from 1593 to 1622 to the number of fifty-six. Of these, five are editions of *Venus and Adonis* and four are editions of *Lucrece,* which on the strength of the dedicatory letter may fairly be claimed for Shakespeare. Twelve of the quartos (it is unnecessary to enumerate them) are anonymous. One of the 1608 quartos of *King Lear* reads Shakspeare; two others—*Love's Labour's Lost* (1598)

and *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1612) have Shakespere. This accounts for twenty-four of the quartos; the remaining thirty-two all spell the name Shakespeare on the title-page—twenty-one as we write it to-day, and the other eleven as Shake-speare, with the characteristic hyphen.[1] To this list should be added the title-page of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* (1598), wherein "Will. Shakespeare" is included among the principal comedians, and of Jonson's *Sejanus* (1616), which names "Will. Shake-Speare" among the tragedians.

It seems hardly worth while to pursue a point that is admitted by all—that it was the well-nigh universal custom of the printers of that day to spell the poet's name Shakespeare. The frequent separation of its syllables as well as the conceits in several of the poetic tributes supports the view that the first syllable was pronounced long in London, no matter what the usage of Stratford may have been.

[1] It should not be overlooked that the name thus hyphenated presents the separate words as they would appear as common nouns in Elizabethan orthography.

VI. *Contemporary Tributes and Allusions*

The evidence of Shakespeare's admirers and critics in his own day is of little practical value in arriving at the proper form of the surname, since in any case another person's spelling of a name is either the copy of some printed or written form, or (worse yet) an attempt at phonetic spelling from hearing the name spoken. Yet the vagaries of Shakespeare's contemporaries in this matter are not without interest, showing as they do a series of variant forms second in number to the documents alone.

Unless Robert Greene's famous "Shake-scene" of 1592 in his *Groats-worth of Wit* be accepted as throwing light on the spelling of the first syllable, the earliest contemporary allusion in which the poet is mentioned by name is in the commendatory verses prefixed to *Willobie his Avisa* (1594) where we find Shake-speare. John Weever, in his *Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare* (1595) uses this spelling in the title and first line, but in the poem the name recurs once as Shakespear. Some of the others who used the spelling Shakespeare previous to the

publication of the First Folio (1623) are Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598); Richard Barnfield (1598); Gabriel Harvey (1598); John Manningham (1601); William Camden (1603); Anthony Scoloker (1604); Thomas Freeman (1614); Edmund Howes (1614); John Taylor (1620); and William Basse in the well-known epitaph on the poet.[1] To these should be added three further instances in which the name is spelled with a hyphen as Shake-speare. These are in Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr* (1601); John Davies' *The Scourge of Folly* (1611?); and John Webster's *The White Divel* (1612).[2]

Apart from the generally accepted spelling, Shakespeare's contemporaries used six others in works that are now accessible, and of these six only Shakspeare occurs more than once; it is found in William Clarke's *Polimanteia* (1595); an anonymous ballad, *A Mourneful Dittie, entituled Elizabeth's Losse* (1603); and in William Barkstead's *Mirrha* (1607). The remaining five, which occur once each, are: Shakespheare, an obvious misprint, in Richard Carew's *The Excellencie of the English*

[1] For the full quotations see Ingleby's *Centurie of Prayse*, (2nd ed.), pp. 21, 26, 30, 45, 59, 63, 64, 106, 108, 133, 136.

[2] Ingleby, pp. 6, 43, 94, 100.

Tongue (1595–96); Shakespere, in Edmund Bolton's *Hypercritica* (1610); Shakespear, in Sir William Drummond's *Works*, written about 1610; and finally, Shakspeer and Sheakspear, both in the *Notes by William Drummond of Conversations with Ben Jonson at Hawthornden* (1619).[1]

Taking this evidence for what it may be worth, we find that Shakespeare's contemporaries almost uniformly spelled his name as most of us prefer to spell it to-day; and that up to 1623 the printed form Shakspere has not been recorded in a single instance.

[1] Ingleby, pp. 15, 56, 76, 20, 91, 111, 129.

VII. *The Period of the Four Folios*

The publication of the First Folio by Heminge and Condell in 1623 naturally marked an epoch in the posthumous reputation of William Shakespeare and in a sense proclaimed an authoritative spelling of his name. Although the register at Stationers' Hall reads "Shakspeer" for this volume, the form Shakespeare is used throughout the folio itself, occasionally with the hyphen. The title-page, the dedication to the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, the address To the great Variety of Readers, Ben Jonson's verses and the minor encomiums of Holland, Digges and I. M. all use this spelling.

The orthographical evolution of the later folios is most curious, so far as the poet's name is concerned. The Second Folio (1632), and likewise the 1663 impression of the Third Folio, have Shakespeare throughout, occasionally with a hyphen, as observed in the quartos. In the 1664 edition, which contains the seven spurious plays, the title-page reads Shakespear, though Ben Jonson's verses under the Droeshout portrait opposite the title retain Shakespeare, as do the other commendatory verses, except two instances of Shakespear. The

Fourth Folio (1684) has Shakespear in every instance. The most probable explanation for this change is, of course, the loss of the final *e* during that period in common and proper names alike.

The writers of the seventeenth century seem to have been guided largely by the usage of the folios. Previous to 1664 the form Shakespeare prevailed, but after that date Shakespear was far more common. Other variations are fairly numerous, though sporadic. In the *Centurie of Prayse* there are one hundred and forty-two quotations from the period 1623–1694 in which the poet is mentioned by name. Of these, sixty-one read Shakespeare, fifty-five are Shakespear, and eight use both of these forms. As for the remaining eighteen, Shakspeare is used by seven, Shakspear by three, Shakespeere, Shackspear and Shakspere by two each, and Shackspeer and Shakspire by one each. Thus, in spite of the close rivalry of Shakespear, the form Shakespeare once more leads, and the rest are negligible.

It is unnecessary to specify all the instances in which the two principal forms occur. Shakespeare was used by Burton, Drayton, Cowley, Jonson, Milton,[1] Sir Aston Cokaine, William Habing-

[1] Milton's *Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet W. Shakespeare* appears in his own poems (1645) as *On Shakespear, 1630.*

ton, Thomas Heywood, Sir William D'Avenant, Richard Brome, Thomas Fuller, Sir John Denham, James Howell, Thomas Randolph, Samuel Pepys, Dryden, John Aubrey and William Walsh. On the other hand, Shakespear was used by Suckling, Shirley, Fuller, Dryden, Denham, Shadwell, Rymer, Tate, Otway, Aubrey, Browne and Langbaine. It will be observed that several names appear in both lists, indicating that men like Fuller, Dryden and Denham varied in their usage.

Turning to minor variants, we shall find their use due to ignorance or carelessness rather than to any deliberate attempt on the part of the writer to modify an accepted spelling. The seven instances[1] in which Shakspeare is found are all obscure. Shakspear occurs[2] in an anonymous manuscript of 1650 first printed by Halliwell-Phillipps; in Richard Flecknoe's *Epigrams* (1670), and in Dryden's prologue to *The Mistakes* (1691), a tragicomedy by Joseph Harris. It is unlikely that Dryden was responsible for the spelling. Shakespeere is found in John Jonson's *The Academy of Love* (1641) and in *The Great Assises Holden in Parnassus* (1645), but the latter also has the

[1] *Centurie of Prayse*, pp. 218, 219, 220, 273, 301, 307, 399.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 277, 345, 411.

forms Shakespeare and Shakespear. Shackspear occurs in *A Hermeticall Banquet* (1651) and in Sir Charles Sedley's *The Wary Widdow* (1693).[1]

The first use of the form Shakspere in any literary reference to the poet is in Sir Richard Baker's *Chronicle of England* (1660) in a passage that also indulges in such orthographical liberties as Broom, Cartwrite, Johnson (for rare Ben), and Sucklin. Besides this inauspicious beginning, the only other example is in Evelyn's letter of August 12, 1689, to Mr. Pepys; as this letter was first printed in Bray's edition of the *Memoirs* (1819) it is possible that the spelling is Bray's.

Shackspeer occurs only in Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix* (1632); and Shakspire only in Martin Parker's *The Poets blind mans Bough* (1641).[3]

In *Some 300 Fresh Allusions to Shakspere from 1594 to 1694 A. D.*, edited by Dr. Furnivall for The New Shakspere Society (1886), there are about ninety additional references in which the poet is named. Of these sixty-seven have the form Shakespear, but all save five are later in date than the Third Folio. Fifteen use Shakespeare,

[1] *Centurie of Prayse*, pp. 238, 260, 290, 418.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 315, 407.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 195, 239.

and the remaining eight show ten different spellings. The *Returne from Pernassus, Part I* (1600) uses Shakspeare, Shakspear and Shakespeare; the preface to William Mountfort's *The Successful Stranger* (1640) has Shaksphear, Shakespear and Shakpher. Others in this group are Shakespere, Shaksper, Shakespeer, Shackspear, Shakesphear and Shaksepeur, the last obviously a typographical mishap.[1] Be it carefully noted that there is not a single instance of Shakspere to reënforce the two sorry examples in *The Centurie of Prayse.*

[1] For the text of these quotations see *Fresh Allusions,* pp. 12*, 179, 183, 235, 265, 301, 341, 351.

VIII. *Modern Editors and Critics*

It is not apparent that the early eighteenth-century editors concerned themselves to any extent over the spelling of Shakespeare's name. In all probability most of them adopted the spelling of the particular folio that served as a basis for their text. The first was Nicholas Rowe (1709) who used the Fourth Folio and adopted the spelling Shakespear. The same form was preserved in his second edition (1714) and in the edition (1723–25) by Alexander Pope, who also based his text on the Fourth Folio. The third editor, Lewis Theobald (1733), not only made the most brilliant emendations in the text, but adopted the First Folio as his basis, wherein he acted in accordance with the most advanced Shakespearean scholarship of the present day. It is a pleasure to record that the admirable Theobald spelled the name Shakespeare, and that this spelling was retained in the later editions of 1740, 1752, 1772 and 1773.

The fourth editor, Sir Thomas Hanmer (1743–44), reverted to the form Shakespear and was fol-

lowed by Warburton (1747) who virtually revised Pope. In the latter half of the century Dr. Johnson (1765), the learned Capell (1768), and Steevens (1773) all used Shakespeare. When the second edition (1778) of the Johnson-Steevens was published Shakspeare was adopted, and was retained by Reed in his revision of that edition (1785) and in all subsequent editions of that text.

In 1788 the London publisher, Bell, issued an edition in twenty volumes, using the spelling Shakspere, thus achieving the doubtful honor of being the first publisher to use that form. He had previously (1774) published a nine-volume edition using Shakespeare. The first editor to make a direct issue of the spelling of the name was Malone (1790), who decided in favor of Shakspeare. This form prevailed for a long time as the most popular of all, although a Johnson-Steevens-Malone edition of "Shakespear" was published at Edinburgh in 1792. Virtually every edition that appeared up to 1840 used the form Shakspeare; among others, the Variorum (Boswell's Malone) of 1821, Harness (1825), Chalmers (1826), Singer (1826), Valpy (1832–34), and Campbell (1838). The curious edition by Bowdler (1807) appeared originally as Shakespeare, but in his sec-

ond edition (1820), besides removing "those words and expressions which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family," he dropped the *e* from the first syllable of the dramatist's name. Later reprints of Bowdler restored the *e,* leaving the restoration of the indecorous "words and expressions" to other less fastidious hands.

Charles Knight[1] was the first warm champion of the form Shakspere (1842), and the many reissues of his edition preserve that spelling. He was followed by Barry Cornwall in 1843. The prevailing modern sentiment was set by Collier (1841–44), who, like Theobald, insisted on Shakespeare. In America, Verplanck (1847) and Hudson (1851) adopted the same form. Halliwell[-Phillipps] (1853–65) favored Shakespeare and wrote much to defend his choice.

Since then the editors have all but unanimously chosen Shakespeare. Among the more noteworthy instances of editors and editions employing that form are Lloyd-Singer (1856), Dyce (1857; 1864–67), Staunton (1858–60), the Cambridge edition (1863–66), Keightley (1864), Charles and Mary

[1] Knight's preference for Shakspere rested mainly on the signature in Florio's Montaigne (1603), which is now regarded as spurious.

Cowden Clarke (1864), White (1865), the Globe edition (1866), the Furness Variorum (1871; in progress), the Oxford edition (1892), the Temple Shakespeare (1894–96), the Eversley edition of Professor Herford (1899), and Professor Dowden's edition (1899; in progress). Among the few editors since the days of Knight who have preferred the shorter spelling Shakspere are Delius (1854–61), Marsh (1864), the Leopold Shakspere, with an Introduction by Dr. Furnivall (1877), and the Elizabethan Shakspere of Professor Mark Liddell (1903; in progress).[1]

The scholars, like the editors, have chosen sides, and although at times their usage varies, it is none the less possible to group them roughly into four classes, according to the form which each critic prefers. The spelling Shakespear, once popular as the form of the last two folios, of Rowe, Pope, Hanmer and Warburton, and used by Burns, Otway, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Shadwell, Shirley and others, has very few defenders to-day; but among

[1] On January 31, 1906, Professor Liddell kindly wrote to me as follows: "I use the spelling you refer to because it is the form given in the New English Dictionary and in the Century Dictionary, reasonably trustworthy standards of English and American usage, besides having the countenance of the best English scholars. I should feel called upon to defend myself for employing any other spelling in my edition of Shakspere."

them are Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt and Mr. G. Bernard Shaw—the latter probably using it because it is the form least likely to be adopted by anyone else. William Hazlitt usually employed Shakespear, though at times he used Shakspeare or Shakespeare.

The second form—Shakspeare—popularized by Malone and predominant for half a century, seems to be obsolescent, though it was used by Coleridge, DeQuincey, Douce, Drake, Macaulay, Mézières, Schlegel, Simrock, Thimm, Tieck, and Ulrici. The late Canon Ainger favored this form. It is still the "official" spelling approved by *The Athenæum,* and was likewise championed by *Notes and Queries* from its inception until that useful little weekly became orthodox in the spelling in 1899.

Thirdly, Shakspere—latest and most rampant of the heterodox forms—was adopted by Madden, Blades, Simpson, Knight, Lanier and Marsh, and is still preferred by Professor Henry Beers,[1] Professor F. Boas, Professor Alois Brandl, Professor

[1] Professor Beers writes: "My preference for Shakspere is simply a matter of taste. It has fewer letters for one thing, as well as good autograph authority. Uniformity is desirable, but not very important; I hope that Shakspere may prevail, but I have no belief that it will."

George R. Carpenter, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, Professor A. W. Ward, Professor Barrett Wendell and his colleagues at Harvard University (*mea culpa,* if any of these scholars are no longer in this category). The late Dr. C. M. Ingleby at first favored Shakspere, but later joined the ranks of the advocates of Shakespeare. Professor Dowden[1] used the short form in his admirable *Shakspere Primer,* but now prefers Shakespeare.

The variants disposed of, we come now to the generally accepted form Shakespeare, whose adherents may enjoy that peace of mind and self-satisfaction that appertain to orthodoxy. Among the more distinguished scholars of the past who have written about the poet in this orthographical category are Abbott, Baynes, Bartlett, Elze, Farmer, Garrick, Gervinus, Hunter, Koch, König, Kreyssig, Lamb, Leo, Lessing, Henry Morley, Reichel,

[1] Professor Dowden writes me: "I have no very decided preference for Shakespeare or for Shakspere, but I incline towards the former chiefly on the ground of the printed 'Shakespeare' at the close of the dedications of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece,* and on the title-page of the first folio. It seems to me therefore that 'Shakespeare' cannot be wrong, while we know that written signatures were often varied either capriciously or for some motive of casual convenience. But it is not a point of conscience with me, and if I were writing in any review which usually gave the form 'Shakspere,' I should comply without any scruple."

Sir Leslie Stephen, and Justin Winsor. It is, moreover, the form used to-day by such scholars as Professor A. C. Bradley, Dr. Georg Brandes, Professor James W. Bright, Mr. Stopford Brooke, Professor J. Churton Collins, Professor Hiram Corson, Mr. F. G. Fleay, Dr. H. H. Furness, Dr. Richard Garnett,[1] Professor John W. Hales, Col. T. W. Higginson, Mr. Sidney Lee, Professor T. R. Lounsbury, Professor Richard G. Moulton, Dr. W. J. Rolfe, Professor George Saintsbury, Professor E. Sievers, Rev. W. W. Skeat, Mr. E. C. Stedman, Mr. A. C. Swinburne and Professor A. H. Tolman. With such names before us we can decide more satisfactorily under which banner to enroll ourselves.

[1] Dr. Garnett died April 13, 1906.

IX. *The Controversy Over the Orthography*

For almost two centuries after the age of Shakespeare his editors and critics wrote the name Shakespear or Shakespeare in blissful indifference toward the question of its correct orthography. It was Steevens and Malone who first assumed that the correct reading of the autographs of the poet would determine the proper spelling.[1] Malone (who for a time employed the very unusual form Shakspear) was present in 1776 when Steevens traced the three signatures of the will. While two of them appeared to be Shakspere, they interpreted the third as Shakspeare and both scholars henceforth wrote the name thus. Malone was afterwards convinced that the third signature was Shakspere, like the others, but he decided to continue writing Shakspeare. He went so far as to assert that if any Shakespeare autograph should come to light in which the name was spelled other than Shakspere, that autograph would be *ipso facto* a forgery. This rash assumption was a result of

[1] See Malone's *Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Miscellaneous Papers* (1796).

his zeal to convict William Henry Ireland of the gross forgeries which the latter brought out toward the end of the eighteenth century.

To John Pinkerton, an obscure and eccentric Scotch critic, has usually been assigned the questionable honor of being the first to advocate the spelling Shakspere. In his *Letters of Literature* (1785), published under the pseudonym Robert Heron, besides suggesting a most ludicrous system of spelling-reform, Pinkerton devoted three caustic letters to the errors in Steevens' edition (1778) of Shakespeare. He used the form Shakspere, but without comment or defence. It is but fair to add that Pinkerton in later years characterized this volume as "a book written in early youth, and containing many juvenile crude ideas long since abandoned by the author." After all, the form Shakspere had previously been advocated elsewhere, since as early as March 15, 1784, a J. Bowle wrote a letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine*[1] condemning the "new fashion of writing Shakespeare's name SHAKSPERE; a mode of pronunciation proper only in the mouth of Mrs. Slipslop."[2] He referred to the fourteen quartos of Shakespeare's plays in his

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, LIV, p. 253; see also p. 505.
[2] In Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*.

possession (happy man) as his authority for the accepted form, and expressed the vain hope that no future editor "will think of adopting this new-fangled spelling."

It is quite probable that the publication of Steevens' fac-similes of the will-signatures caused the first disputes concerning the orthography and that Pinkerton was in no wise responsible for its inception. Certainly the controversy was carried on during 1787 in a series of hitherto neglected letters in the *Gentleman's Magazine.* Both Shakspere and the "utter abomination of the lately-adopted spelling of Shakspear" were condemned and afterwards as zealously defended.[1] The readers of the magazine apparently grew tired of the discussion, as one suggested[2] that a summary be made to dismiss the matter most effectively. There was little further mention of the controversy until in 1817 a correspondent[3] pleaded for Shakespear as the only form that preserved the obvious signification of the separate words.

The first work directly on the subject was Sir Frederic Madden's *Observations on an Autograph*

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine,* LVII, pp. 24, 125, 204; LIX, pp. 478, 480, 494, 689.

[2] *Ibid.,* LVIII, p. 33.

[3] *Ibid.,* LXXXVII, part I (498–499).

of Shakspere and the Orthography of his Name, communicated to *Archæologia*[1] and reprinted in pamphlet form (1838). Madden briefly considered in turn the various autographs of the poet, accepting as genuine the signature in the Florio Montaigne of 1603. His conclusion was that "the poet always wrote his name Shakspere. . . . This I state in opposition to Chalmers and Drake who assert that 'all the genuine signatures of Shakspeare are dissimilar.'" The usefulness of Madden's study is much impaired by the fact that the only autograph in which the second syllable is distinctly written is now regarded as a forgery.

Madden's conclusions were, however, favorably received by Henry Hallam in his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe,* and led to a second epistolary controversy in the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine,* inaugurated by a letter[2] from Isaac D'Israeli under the date of December 17, 1839, protesting against the innovation. He admitted that the autographs were probably Shakspere, but gave many of the good reasons for preferring Shakespeare that are cited to-day. In conclusion he wrote: "I rejoice that the most able writer on

[1] *Archæologia,* XXVII (113–123).
[2] *Gentleman's Magazine,* 1840, I (39–40).

our dramatic history, Mr. Payne Collier, has adopted the genuine name, as also the judicious Mr. Dyce. I here enter *my* protest: while a drop of ink circulates in my pen, I shall ever loyally write the name of SHAKESPEARE."[1]

On January 16, 1840, John Bruce replied[2] at length to D'Israeli. He admitted at the outset that he was a "Maddenite" and that he "renounced the first *e* and abjured the second *a*" in the poet's name. He pertinently called D'Israeli's attention to the fact that in the last edition of the latter's *Curiosities of Literature* the name was spelled Shakspeare at least five times; in other words, as an argument for Shakspere, Bruce convicted his opponent of having indiscreetly used the form Shakspeare, which, as we have seen, had been the prevailing spelling of the previous half-century. Apart from this luminous rejoinder, Bruce made as good a plea for Shakspere as has appeared anywhere since his day.

In the March number[3] Sir Frederic Madden resumed the discussion. He reduced the question at issue to this brief proposition: Ought we to be

[1] There is an article on this subject in later editions of D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature.*

[2] *Gentleman's Magazine,* 1840, I (161–166).

[3] *Ibid.,* pp. (262–263).

guided by the variable authority of the press and small wit of some pointless pun? or, Shall we adopt the unvarying (!) evidence furnished to us by the hand of the Dramatic Bard himself? With due expression of regard for D'Israeli, Collier, Dyce and Hunter, he nevertheless expected Shakspere to maintain its ground against all comers. The second portion of Sir Frederic's proposition is noteworthy for its splendid assurance if for nothing else: other more expert "manuscript men," after futile attempts to decipher the Shakespeare signatures, have come to a conclusion that will appeal to most of us—namely, that as a purveyor of autographical evidence the "Dramatic Bard" was a distinct failure. In the same number[1] of the magazine, Mr. John William Burgon further complicated the situation by urging anew the spelling Shakspeare, though his argument made a far better case for Shakespeare than for the form that he advocated.

Joseph Hunter entered the fray in April,[2] replying specifically to Madden in a letter that may be regarded as a first draft of the material which he afterwards used in his *New Illustrations*. His

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1840, I (263–265).
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. (369–374).

communication was followed by a second long letter from John Bruce, who concerned himself more particularly with Mr. Burgon.[1] But the discussion was not permitted to assume the complexion of a double debate. A new champion of Shakspere appeared[2] in the person of Bolton Corney. In May[3] Burgon offered a warm rejoinder to Bruce, and in June[4] the latter replied in a rambling letter that closed the desultory debate from which the more discreet had already withdrawn. At the approach of summer both editor and combatants must have felt that the public had enough of this futile controversy that promised to lead nowhere. In view of the evidence presented elsewhere in these pages, it would be useless to dwell here upon the specific arguments advanced by these various correspondents for the edification of the readers of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1840.

After Joseph Hunter's defence of the form Shakespeare in his already-mentioned *New Illustrations* (1845), the next writer who gave noteworthy attention to this subject was Richard Grant White, who, in his *Shakespeare's Scholar* (1854),

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1840, I (374–379).
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. (379–380).
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. (474–480).
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. (591–594).

had a brief chapter[1] on "Shakespeare's Name." After citing the usual reasons for preferring that form, he suggested that with John Shaksper's becoming a man of consideration and substance by his marriage into the Arden family and by the subsequent grant of arms, the "herald saw and seized the opportunity which the name afforded for punning blazonry" and with the right to bear a spear *or* on a bend *sable* came the change to Shakespeare; but as old customs change with difficulty, the form Shakspere survived at Stratford, though the dramatist became more generally known as Shakespeare in London.

The article on "Shakspere's Name" written by Professor C. F. Koch in 1865 has been considered in a previous chapter.[2] George Russell French, in his *Shakspeareana Genealogica* (1868) chose a middle ground and became a belated advocate of the form Shakspeare. Karl Elze reviewed[3] the controversy at length with much skill in 1869, and gave sufficient reasons for the general adoption of Shakespeare. In the same year appeared a curious pamphlet by George Wise, entitled *The Autograph*

[1] White, *Shakespeare's Scholar*, pp. (478–480).
[2] See p. 4.
[3] *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, V (325–332).

of William Shakespeare, with FacSimiles of his Signature as appended to various Legal Documents; together with 4000 Ways of Spelling the Name according to English Orthography. The author discussed not only the accepted signatures but the Montaigne and Holinshed autographs as well. At the top of each of his thirty-two pages he printed a different form of Shakespeare's name, and devoted the second half of the pamphlet to the four thousand theoretical combinations that would produce Shakespeare or something like it. As an example of the possibilities of the English alphabet the exercise is interesting, but the quotation of a few gems like Schaiksspaerr, Schaquespyrre, Scheyquesspeirre, Shayxspirr and Sheyquesspearr will suffice to show its futility. Strangely enough, this long list of absurd creations lacks a number of spellings that actually occur. We should be thankful that Mr. Wise did not urge the adoption of any of these heirs of his invention. Recently a still more ingenious mathematical spirit, Mr. H. B. Philipps, compiled[1] a table showing 1,036,800 possible spellings of the name of the poet, and added with becoming modesty that "many other ways are possible, but these are enough." Many

[1] *Notes and Queries* (Ninth Series), III, p. 43.

of us would fain persuade the advocates of Shakspere that two ways are just one more than enough.

On July 22, 1872, Mr. Henry Dircks wrote to *The Athenæum*[1] asking if it was not "high time that our modern literature should acknowledge a single mode of spelling our great dramatist's name, to the exclusion of all others as affected or obsolete." He seemed to favor Shakespeare, though his choice was not clearly expressed. To this letter Mr. John Pigot, Jr., replied,[2] calling attention to the variations in contemporary documents and presenting several arguments for Shakespeare. A second correspondent, J. Y. J., defended Shakspere (which was then used by the British Museum) on the strength of the autographs.

When Dr. F. J. Furnivall organized the New Shakspere Society in 1874 the whole question arose once more. In a letter[3] to *The Academy* he wrote: "I have been taken to task by several old Shaksperean students for spelling our great poet's name as he spelt it himself, SHAKSPERE, and not as some of his contemporaries spell it, Shakspeare or Shakespeare. The opinion evidently prevails among

[1] *Athenæum*, 1872, II, p. 147.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

[3] *Academy*, V, p. 95. See also Dr. Furnivall's prospectus, and a later letter, printed in *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, XV (413–414).

some folk that though the poor man could write plays, he did not know how to spell his own name. . . . Neither the practices of Shakespeare's friends, critics or printers, nor the possibly spurious autographs in books never proved to be his, can stand for a moment against his own unquestioned signatures to legal documents. SHAKSPERE, then, is the right spelling of the poet's name."

Two years later the discussion was renewed in this country. "How shall we spell Sh-k-sp-r-'s Name?" asked J. H. Gilmore in *Scribner's Monthly*.[1] He quoted largely from Richard Grant White and Dr. Furnivall, agreeing finally with the latter on the unimpeachable assumption that a man has a right to spell his name as he pleases. Shakespeare he regarded as a "fashionable form, arising much as Smith might become Smythe."

In Karl Elze's painstaking biography (1876) of Shakespeare, which was translated into English in 1888, there is an appendix on "The Orthography of Shakespeare's Name," in which the subject was presented as previously treated by Elze in the *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch* article. Still more detailed was the discussion by Dr. C. M. Ingleby in his

[1] *Scribner's Monthly*, XII (13–15).

Shakespeare, The Man and The Book (1877) which contains chapters on "The Spelling of the Surname" and "The Meaning of the Surname."

Mr. J. F. Marsh complained in 1877 to the editor of *Notes and Queries*[1] that his communications were spelled Shakespeare, but the proof always had it Shakspeare. He insisted on the right to spell the name to suit himself, and maintained that there was no accepted orthography until the First Folio crystallized the variants into Shakespeare. He divided opinion on the subject into three classes. First, those who hold that Shakespeare, whether right or wrong, has acquired such general acceptance that there is no sufficient justification for meddling with it. Secondly, those who regard the testimony of the known autographs as conclusive, which would lead to Shakspere. Thirdly, those who regard the first syllable as short, and write it so, giving either Shakspeare or Shakspear. In conclusion he begged to enroll himself with many of the best scholars of the day under Shakespeare.

There was no editorial response to this complaint, but, shortly after, C. F. S. Warren called Marsh to task for using the spelling Shakespearian

[1] *Notes and Queries* (Fifth Series), VIII (41–42).

instead of Shakespearean.[1] On the same page C. A. Ward wrote tersely: "Prove how a man writes his own name, and you prove how it ought to be written. Shakspere is therefore right, let who will differ." Somewhat later Cuthbert Bede quoted[2] from Albert Smith that the controversy had been settled by the discovery of this quatrain in the Harleian MSS. at the British Museum:

How dyd Shakespeare spell hys name?
Ye weatherre mayde ye change, we saye,
So write it as ye please;
When ye sonne shone he mayde hys A,
When wette he tooke hys E'es.

Edgar S. VanWinkle wrote on *The Spelling of Shakespeare's Name* in the *International Review*[3] in 1878, and decided in favor of the popular form on etymological grounds. Assuming that both syllables are pronounced long, he regarded this spelling as "consonant with the pronunciation." He believed it more likely that Shakespeare was vulgarly reduced to Shakspeare than that the latter was lengthened to Shakespeare.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 137. On pp. (273–274) Marsh defended *-ian* instead of *-ean* as the normal form when the penult of the suffix is not to bear the stress of the word.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[3] *International Review*, V (690–694).

A curious example of the very undesirable irregularities occasioned by these variations occurred in 1879, when Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith used her favorite though unusual form Shakespere in her preface to the second edition of Dr. Ingleby's *Centurie of Prayse,* wherein the author had used Shakespeare and preferred that form, and, to cap the climax, the book was published by the New Shakspere Society, where Dr. Furnivall's spelling prevailed. It is interesting to observe that the wishes of all three were duly obeyed by the compositors in every instance in which the name occurred.

Probably the best-known pamphlet called forth by this controversy was Halliwell-Phillipps' *New Lamps or Old?* first published at Brighton (1879) under the title *Which Shall it Be? New Lamps or Old? Shaxpere or Shakespeare?* The author cited the frequent variations in such Elizabethan names as Dudley, Alleyn, etc., and particularly emphasized the fact that one of Shakespeare's sons-in-law is referred to as Quiney, Quyney, Quyneye, Conoy, etc., the other as Hall, Hawle, Halle or Haul. He insisted that as we have Shakespeare's signature on three occasions only, it is not safe to assume that he always wrote Shakspere.

In fact, he believed that there is an *a* in the second syllable of the third signature to the will, but regarded the *e* in the first syllable as the significant letter. In 1880 an enlarged version (forty pages instead of sixteen) appeared as *New Lamps or Old? A Few Additional Words on the Momentous Question Respecting the E and A in the Name of our National Dramatist.* At the outset, he alluded to the wide-spread discussion which the pamphlet has aroused—"besides an excellent leading article in one of the prominent London dailies, there were a score of other notices showing the interest a resuscitation of an old difficulty had excited." One writer in the *Daily News* scented a Tory propaganda in the author's attitude, maintaining that "the Tories, having done their best to prevent the introduction of Free Trade and the Reform Bill, are now completing their iniquities by spelling the name of the great dramatist in the way in which he himself printed it in the first edition of his own poems; that the vagabonds who write *Shakespeare* are bucolic and pig-headed Conservatives, and that the angels who prefer Shakspere are advanced and enlightened Radicals." Many declared that the whole matter was quite unworthy of discussion; that it was of more importance to read Shake-

speare's works; above all, to understand them and profit by them. After analyzing the signatures in detail, and quoting a few more early printed allusions in support of Shakespeare, Halliwell-Phillipps printed as an appendix some of the more interesting press-notices of the first edition of his pamphlet. Among these, the *Manchester Guardian* said: "There is one argument not to be disdained for the spelling Shakspere. It is the shortest orthography that has yet been proposed, and that in a busy age is a very great recommendation."

The immediate discussion aroused by *New Lamps or Old?* quickly made its way into Germany. W. Rolfs sought to refute the contentions of Halliwell-Phillipps in an article[1] entitled *Shakspere oder Shakespeare?* but was promptly answered by Fritz Krauss in *Shakespeare oder Shakspere?* It is noteworthy that the longer spelling is more generally used in Germany than in England or America, probably as a result of its adoption by the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft as early as 1864.

Mr. R. A. Douglas Lithgow gave a very satisfactory treatment of the subject in 1880–81 in two papers[2] on *The Orthography of Shakespeare's*

[1] *Gegenwart,* XVII (281–282) and (408–410).
[2] *The Antiquary,* II (190–194) and III (17–20).

Name. He assumed that though the spelling of the name is unimportant in itself, anything connected with Shakespeare is of sufficient interest to justify any earnest attempt to throw light upon the minutest detail. He cited the early Warwickshire variations, the evidence of the Stratford registers, the five autographs, and numerous contemporary documents and printed allusions; in short, he made the first comprehensive survey of the subject, and decided with the majority.

In 1880 was issued Part V of *Contributions to a Catalogue of The Lenox Library,* in which the compiler drew up a valuable list of the scholars using each of the more common spellings of the name. He found that Shakespear was used by forty-two, Shakspere by thirty-three (of whom at least four later preferred Shakespeare), Shakspeare was used by one hundred and eleven, and Shakespeare by two hundred and forty-one. In conclusion he wrote: "it is certainly a reproach to English-speaking people that they cannot agree how to spell the name of their greatest author. Let the minorities yield to the large majority, and hereafter all unite in SHAKESPEARE."

Since the days of *New Lamps or Old?* there has been comparatively little discussion about the

matter. Professor Hiram Corson, in his useful *Introduction to Shakespeare* (1889), has a note[1] in which he presents succinctly the arguments for the usual form. Dr. F. J. Furnivall's paper of 1895 for Shakspere has already been considered.[2] Mr. Sidney Lee, in his *Life of William Shakespeare* (1898), an expanded version of his article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, defended the accepted spelling; it is hardly necessary to mention that Mr. Lee may be fairly regarded as the highest English authority at the present moment in matters Shakespearean.

Mr. John E. Yerbury tried to stir up the smouldering fires in a letter to *The Academy* in 1898, in which, after defending Shakspere as the form[3] adopted "with strong reason" by the New Shakspere Society, he asked the editor to throw open his columns to a "little discussion on the subject, so that, if possible, we may arrive at an accepted form of spelling for the greatest name in our or any other language."

Apparently there was little interest in this invitation to renew a futile discussion, as the only pub-

[1] Corson, pp. (358–360).
[2] See p. 21.
[3] *The Academy*, LII, p. 532.

lished reply was the interesting note of Mr. G. S. Layard[1] printed somewhat later. He wrote: "In that very valuable little book (which I fancy can be had for the asking), 'Rules for Compositors and Readers employed at the Clarendon Press, Oxford,' compiled by Mr. Horace Hart, and revised by Dr. J. A. H. Murray and Mr. Henry Bradley, we find the following instruction: 'Shakspere is scholarly, as—the New Shakspere Society. —Dr. J. A. H. Murray. (But the Clarendon Press is already committed to the more extended spelling. H. H.)' A sort of editorial *carte* and *tierce* that reads somewhat curiously."

Dr. Horace Howard Furness, who is devoting his life to his monumental Variorum edition, used the spelling Shakespeare from the first, but not until the year 1899 in the preface to *Much Ado About Nothing* did he express a direct opinion upon the question. In commenting on the variations between Mr. Arber's transcription of the Stationers' Registers and the readings given by earlier scholars like Collier and Dyce he said that these differences are "full of sad warning when we approach the awful problem of the spelling of the Poet's name as deduced from his written signature.

[1] *The Academy*, LII, p. 563.

For myself, I at once acknowledge that I prefer to accept the spelling, SHAKESPEARE, adopted by the Poet himself, and so printed by his fellow-townsman, RICHARD FIELD, in both *Venus and Adonis* and in *Lucrece*. This alone is for me quite sufficient, and evidently his contemporaries shared the same position."[1]

Mr. Charles Allen, in *Notes on the Bacon-Shakespeare Question* (1900), has a chapter on the want of uniformity in spelling the name, but beyond declaring that most modern writers have adopted the form Shakespeare, he does not discuss the merits of that spelling. In Mr. William H. Edwards' *Shaksper not Shakespeare* (1900) an attempt is made to show that the Stratford Shaksper and the dramatist Shakespeare were different individuals. The idea was not a new one, being found at least as early as 1887 in Reichel's *Shakespeare Litteratur*. A German Baconian, Count Vitzthum von Eckstädt, in his *Shakespeare und Shakspere* (1888) even insisted that the names were etymologically distinct; the former being a combination of the words shake and spear, the latter a corruption of Jacques Pierre. Edwin Reed, another Baconian, makes a similar distinc-

[1] Furness, *Much Ado About Nothing*, p. xi.

tion in his *Bacon vs. Shakspere* (1897); *Francis Bacon, our Shake-speare* (1899) and *Bacon and Shakespeare Parallelisms,* wherein Shake-speare is simply regarded as a pseudonym of Sir Francis.

A remarkable coincidence was pointed out[1] a few years ago by an observant defender of the form Shakespear. A careful study of this spelling disclosed the fact that it contains four vowels and six consonants. Now four and six placed side by side undoubtedly make forty-six. At this crucial stage in his calculations the enthusiast was inspired to turn to the forty-sixth Psalm in the Authorized Version. He counted to the forty-sixth word from the beginning, and stopped at *shake.* After recovering from his surprise, he started at the end and counted back to the forty-sixth word, only to reach *spear!* Thus he not only proved that Shakespear is the correct spelling, but, incidentally, that the poet translated the Book of Psalms.

Very recently the orthography has received due consideration in Dr. Rolfe's *Life of Shakespeare* (1904), in an appendix to Mr. F. St. John Corbett's *History of British Poetry* (1905), and in the revised (fifth) edition of Mr. Lee's *Life of Shakespeare* (1905). All of these express their unqualified preference for the form Shakespeare.

[1] *Publishers' Circular,* LXXVI, p. 30.

In conclusion, it should be observed that at present the spelling Shakspere is approved by the *Century Dictionary of Names*, by the editors of the *New English Dictionary*, by *The Century Magazine*, *The Nation*,[1] and several less prominent periodicals. It is used in the library of Columbia University[2] and likewise enjoys the approbation of the English Department of Harvard University,[3] though the spelling Shakespeare has been used by the Harvard College Library for many years and represents the personal preference of the librarian, Mr. William C. Lane.

The form Shakespeare has been adopted by the British Museum, the Clarendon Press, the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, the Library of Congress, and the libraries of Yale, Princeton, Cornell and

[1] The editor of *The Nation* kindly wrote me as follows: "We adopted the form Shakspere following Dr. Furnivall's stout contention for it. It is the form since adopted by the editor of the Oxford English Dictionary. Its chances of survival seem good, even if it do not supplant Shakespeare, etc. I consider uniformity in this case of no importance."

[2] The librarian, Mr. James H. Canfield, informs me that this spelling came down from Mr. Dewey's administration.

[3] Professor G. L. Kittredge has been good enough to write that Shakspere "was adopted as the official form for the College Catalogue, etc., more than twenty years ago, at the instance of the late Professor Child. I prefer that form and think Shakspere did. Uniformity, though desirable, is not very important."

the University of Pennsylvania.[1] Through the American Library Association this form has become the standard for almost every important library in this country. Poole's *Index to Periodical Literature,* faithful to Shakspere throughout its first four volumes, became converted in the fifth (1897–1902); the more recent *Annual Literary Index, Cumulative Guide to Periodicals* and the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* never used any other form than Shakespeare.

Briefly summarizing the evidence brought together in these pages, we find that the name occurred originally in numerous variant forms; that at Stratford the spelling Shakspere prevailed for a time, though rarely after the beginning of the dramatist's career; that the Stationers' registers and other contemporary documents present a wilderness of confusing variations; that although four of the five autographs seem intended to spell Shakspere, the title-pages of the quartos and of the First Folio point more strongly to the form Shakespeare. If the usage of later scholars and critics is of less weight, it is at least noteworthy

[1] Professor William H. Brown of Johns Hopkins University writes that they have no "official" spelling of the name, though he personally prefers Shakespeare.